

To the members of the Transportation Committee and Representatives of the communities affected by Waterbury Train service,

Dear all,

I would like to voice my strong support for Proposed SB 492 - AN ACT EXPANDING SERVICE ON THE WATERBURY RAIL LINE. Over ten years ago, I began taking the Waterbury Train on my commute from Ansonia to my workplace in Norwalk. My reason was traffic congestion on Route 8, which has only been reinforced as congestion has worsened. The Waterbury train line suffers from severe lack of service, as infrastructure and equipment limits service to once every 2.5 hours. In addition, Metro North simply does not have enough equipment to properly maintain the diesel engines that are used on this branch, and it is this lack of equipment that prevents appropriate back up relief and critical maintenance time to consistently meet day to day on time percentage and busing reduction rates. Metro North currently employs 3 diesels that are shared between Waterbury and Danbury and they run on average 20 hours a day, every day.

Still, despite its unreliability, I and most others take this train, because it is far more cost effective than trying to drive on the Rt-8 and I-95 corridors. The most common reason I have found over the years as to why people still park their cars on Route 8 and I-95 rather than take this train, is the Waterbury Train's current unreliability. Still in the face of this, there is an extremely strong demand by the public for improved service on this line. Several years ago, the addition of one single train, running in only one direction (early morning run from Waterbury to Bridgeport) significantly increased ridership. A simple increase of service reliability on the Waterbury Train would increase ridership exponentially. An increase in service would increase ridership by several factors more. All of this would be complimented by a proportionate decrease of traffic on our roadways.

The Waterbury Train is a vital piece of our transit network that needs to be upgraded. All of the communities in the Naugatuck Valley have long since faded from being the industrial powerhouses they once were. Their future is as bedroom communities for the financial centers of Stamford and New York. Convenient rail transportation will allow for expanded service to New York. It will allow for increased revenue to come from out of state, and will provide incentive for developers to revitalize the old factories of the Naugatuck Valley into tax generating living spaces.

To do nothing for this train, or to provide only enough support to maintain current operations, will only hurt the economies of the Naugatuck Valley. Transportation issues are a major factor in deciding where you are going to live. Without this train, I would seriously have to exercise the option of moving out of state for employment.

With Regards,

David M. Boudreau, Ph.D